

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0659

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORT, UN, US, BY

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: AIDES-MEMOIRE ON KOREA AND PUERTO RICO

REF: STATE 181704, STATE 181500, STATE 188804, STATE 189061,
BUJUMBURA 0444

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED STATE 181704 AND 181500, I CALLED ON BURUNDI FOREIGN MINISTER MELCHIOR BWAKIRA JULY 31 TO PRESENT THE AIDE MEMOIRE ON PUERTO RICO AND TO REVIEW ORALLY THE KOREA QUESTION, AS WELL AS TO REPORT THE LATEST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE RESUMPTION OF A U.S. BILATERAL AID PROGRAM (SUBJECT SEPTEL).

2. BWAKIRA JUST RETURNED TO BURUNDI JULY 23 FROM A TRIP TO BELGIUM AND FRANCE AFTER THE OAU MEETING, AND HE HAS BEEN VERY BUSY RECEIVING VISITING DIGNITARIES AND A STREAM OF HEADS OF MISSION ANXIOUS TO SEE HIM DURING ONE OF HIS BRIEF SOJOURNS IN BUJUMBURA. HE SAID HE WAS PLANNING TO ATTEND THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND SUMMIT MEETINGS IN COLOMBO BUT WOULD NOT CONFIRM WHETHER OR NOT PRESIDENT MICOMBERO INTENDED TO GO (BASED ON PRESENT INDICATIONS, THE EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT HE WILL). BWAKIRA WAS HIS USUAL SUAVE, COURTEOUS, SEEMINGLY IMPERTURABLE SELF (HE HAS THE KIND OF STIFF RESERVE COMMON TO BURUNDIANS IN THEIR OFFICIAL MANNER, AND IT TAKES A WARM UP PERIOD OF DISCUSSION AND SOME EXTRA EFFORT BEFORE ONE CAN INDUCE A SMILE OR REACTION FROM HIM). AS EXPECTED, HE WAS CAUTIOUS

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AND BASICALLY NONCOMMITTAL IN HIS RESPONSE TO BOTH THE PUERTO

RICAN AND KOREAN QUESTIONS. PERHAPS IN DEFERENCE TO MY STRONG EMPHASIS ON THEIR PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO US AND CONSEQUENTLY TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, HE WAS CONCILIATORY TO THE EXTENT THAT HE DID NOT TRY TO MAKE A BURUNDI CASE IN OPPOSITION TO THE U.S. POINT OF VIEW. BUT HE CERTAINLY LEFT THE DOOR OPEN FOR DOING SO LATER.

3. THE PRESENTATION OF THIS AIDE MEMOIRE ON PUERTO RICO FOLLOWS A SERIES OF MATERIALS ON PUERTO RICAN HISTORY AND ITS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE U.S. THAT THE EMBASSY HAS PROVIDED TO THE MINISTER AND OTHER BURUNDI OFFICIALS OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS IN AN EFFORT TO INDUCE AT LEAST BURUNDI'S ABSENCE ON THIS ISSUE IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. FOLLOWING MY ORAL REVIEW OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE'S POINTS, BWAKIRA REPLIED THAT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR HIS GOVERNMENT. WHEN HE CONTINUED WITH SOME COMMENTS THAT SEEMED TO BE LEADING UP TO A VIEW THAT THE REFERENDUMS IN PUERTO RICO WERE PAST HISTORY AND PERHAPS NOT INDICATIVE OF CURRENT PUERTO RICAN DESIRES, I REMINDED HIM AGAIN OF THE ELECTION BEING HELD THIS YEAR IN WHICH PARTIES RUNNING ON INDEPENDENCE PLATFORMS WERE FREELY PARTICIPATING. HE SAID IN THAT CASE THAT IF THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT SAW THAT THE PUERTO RICANS HAD TRULY AND FREELY BEEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY BY THE U.S. TO EXPRESS THEIR WISHES ON SELF-DETERMINATION, IT WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO TREAT PUERTO RICO AS AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. COMMENT: THERE WAS ENOUGH OF A HINT IN HIS RESPONSE THAT BURUNDI COULD SUBSCRIBE TO A CUBAN SPONSORED LINE THAT ELECTIONS IN PUERTO RICO ARE RIGGED BY THE U.S. TO GIVE NO PARTICULAR COMFORT TO US YET CONCERNING BURUNDI'S STANCE ON THIS ISSUE. WE REMAIN HOPEFUL, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS AN OUTSIDE CHANCE THE BURUNDIANS WILL DECIDE TO REMAIN NEUTRAL IN THE WAKE OF CURRENT EFFORTS TO EMPHASIZE TO THE GRB THAT IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS CANNOT DEPEND SIMPLY ON THE PLANNED RESUMPTION OF A U.S. BILATERAL AID PROGRAM BUT MUST DEPEND ALSO ON POSITIVE GESTURES ON THE GRB'S PART.

4. ON THE KOREAN QUESTION, WHICH WE BOTH ACKNOWLEDGED WAS A MORE DIFFICULT ONE ON WHICH TO FIND COMMON GROUND IN VIEW OF PAST BURUNDI CO-SPONSORSHIP OF PRO-NORTH KOREAN RESOLUTIONS, I REVIEWED THE DEMANDS BEING MADE BY NORTH KOREA AND THE REASONS WHY THEY WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE U.S. I STRESSED OUR SERIOUSNESS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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HOLDING A FOUR PARTY CONFERENCE AS EVIDENCED MOST RECENTLY IN THE SECRETARY'S JULY 22 PROPOSAL FOR THE CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE DURING THE FORTHCOMING UNGA IF ALL PARTIES AGREE. I PUT PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE DISPARITY BETWEEN BURUNDI'S CLAIM TO FOLLOW A NON-ALIGNED POLICY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME TAKING A TOTALLY ONE-SIDED APPROACH IN FAVOR OF NORTH KOREA; I MENTIONED, ALSO IN THIS REGARD, NORTH KOREA'S SECURITY TREATIES WITH CHINA AND USSR WHICH CLEARLY PLACED IT IN THE COMMUNIST BLOC (THE EMBASSY HAD

SENT TO BWAKIRA BEFOREHAND FRENCH TRANSLATIONS OF THESE TREATIES ALONG WITH OUR OWN TREATY WITH SOUTH KOREA, BUT HE SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN THEM). AND I CONCLUDED BY URGING THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT AS A NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY TO TAKE A MORE OBJECTIVE LOOK AT THE KOREAN QUESTION AND TO SUPPORT WHAT WAS AN ENTIRELY REASONABLE APPEAL FOR OPENING NEGOTIATIONS ON KOREA'S FUTURE THAT INCLUDED THE PRESENCE OF SOUTH KOREANS WHO MAKE UP TWO-THIRD'S OF THE PENINSULA'S POPULATION. BWAKIRA RESPONDED THAT THERE WERE MANY COMPLEXITIES TO EXPLAIN BURUNDI'S SUPPORT OF NORTH KOREA, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS NORTH KOREA'S ASSISTANCE AND CLOSE TIES TO BURUNDI FOR SOME YEARS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE COULD NOT GIVE AN OFFICIAL BURUNDI RESPONSE TO OUR DEMARCHE AT THIS TIME. HE WANTED FIRST TO CONSULT WITH HIS COLLEAGUES IN COLOMBO, INCLUDING NORTH KOREA, TO HAVE AN IDEA OF THE PROS AND CONS OF THE QUESTION. I REPEATED OUR DOUBTS CONCERNING NORTH KOREA'S CREDENTIALS AS A NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY AND WONDERED JUST HOW HE MIGHT ALSO OBTAIN THE VIEWS OF THE SOUTH KOREANS IN ORDER TO BALANCE THE PICTURE. I USED THIS MOMENT TO POSE AGAIN (SEE BUJUMBURA 0444 AND STATE 189061) THE QUESTION WHETHER IN BWAKIRA'S OPINION THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WILLING TO RECEIVE A SOUTH KOREAN DIPLOMAT IN THE CONTEXT OF BURUNDI'S NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN TO HIS KNOWLDGE NO CONTACT BETWEEN THE MICOMBERO GOVERNMENT AND SOUTH KOREA, EVEN DURING THE TIME THAT SOUTH KOREA HAD A MISSION IN NEIGHBORING RWANDA HE THEN ADDED THAT HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA OF WHAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE WOULD BE TO SUCH AN APPROACH NOW AND COULD NOT GIVE AN ANSWER. COMMENT: BWAKIRA'S RESPONSE CONCERNING A SOUTH KOREAN APPROACH WAS MORE NON-COMMITTAL THAN BEFORE AND UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTED HIS DESIRE TO HEDGE UNTIL PRESIDENT MICOMBERO'S VIEWS ARE CLARIFIED ON THIS MATTER.

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